

FOCUS ON THE FIRST

MONTHLY CONSTITUENT NEWSLETTER

COUNCILMAN CHRIS FORD—1ST COUNCIL DISTRICT
LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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INVESTING IN LEXINGTON'S FUTURE

As our calendars move closer towards spring & summer, local youth advocates are planning exciting & engaging activities for youth all across Lexington.

Partners for Youth will host a "Spotlight on Youth" at the Lyric Theatre on Saturday, April 12th. Festivities begin at 7:00 PM. In collaboration with Fayette County Public Schools, and the University of Kentucky's Center for Community Outreach, this event showcases the talents of Lexington youth. In addition, the Spotlight promotes the efforts of local organizations & agencies who share missions in youth development, positive engagement and educational achievement.

It's been nearly three (3) years since I had the fortunate to join & lead Lexington's youth advocates in addressing issues related to youth safety & development. I'm proud & thankful for the roles Partners for Youth, Parks & Recreation and Youth Services play in advocating for community teamwork & coalition building with interested stakeholders. From my past experience as a volunteer youth sports coach, I am convinced our city has many folks who are invested & committed to empowering Lexington youth.

I look forward to attending the Spotlight on Youth on April 12th, and offering my brief remarks to our youth and families. Please help us spread the word, and I hope you can join us!



Young drummers at 2012 Spotlight



Councilman Ford, Bruce Mundy, Kerby Neill
and youth at the 2012 Spotlight



Chris Ford
Councilman, 1st District

APRIL CALENDAR:

5 & 7—NCAA Final Four

8—Mayor's Budget Address 3:00pm

10—Council Meeting 6:00pm

12—Spotlight on Youth (Lyric Theatre) 7:00pm

19—YMCA Black Achievers Banquet (Embassy Suites) 6:00pm

20—Easter

22—Earth Day

24—Council Meeting 6:00pm

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NEW PARKING LOT TO ANCHOR EXPANSION OF CHAS. YOUNG PARK

Visitors to the Charles Young Center will soon benefit from access to approximately 20 off-street parking spaces. The new parking lot is located along the Shropshire Boulevard extension (formerly known as Ann Street). Construction is scheduled for completion in late April 2014. Also, additional park enhancements are scheduled for Charles Young Park this spring. Please stay tuned for future updates!



FRIENDS GATHER FOR YMCA'S LIVESTRONG LUNCHEON

The YMCA of Central Kentucky hosted its 2014 LIVESTRONG Cancer Survivors Luncheon at the North Lexington YMCA branch on March 19th. I was fortunate to bring remarks on behalf of LFUCG, which is a funding partner of the program. LIVESTRONG is a wellness program designed to help cancer survivors in physical fitness & emotional support. Over 200 participants have been involved since the YMCA launched the program in 2011, including Council Member Shevawn Akers, who also attended the luncheon.



MAYOR & COUNCIL MAKE BIG STEP TOWARDS AHTF

On March 18th, Mayor Jim Gray proposed to Urban County Council an initial funding allocation of \$3 million to support the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). In addition, \$500,000 was allocated for Homelessness Services.

These financial proposals were part of a \$10 million package of budget amendments presented by Bill O'Mara, LFUCG Commissioner of Finance. The current fiscal year (2013 – 2014) is projecting to have a significant unassigned fund balance at the year end date of June 30th. Public safety capital needs totaling \$6.5 million will also be addressed, to the benefit of the Divisions of Police, Fire and Corrections.

I contend this investment of \$3 million is a major step forward in creating a local funding strategy to address needed affordable housing in Lexington. However, the Mayor's Office and Urban County Council must now collaboratively formulate a sustainable plan for operational structure of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, as well as an on-going revenue source to support the program. I look forward to being an active representative in this forthcoming effort & to building the needed consensus amongst Council Members to achieve this long-awaited goal of a local Affordable Housing Trust Fund.



Rev. Adam Jones (far right) and other BUILD members illustrate support for Affordable Housing Trust Fund at the March 20th Urban County Council Meeting.

FAIR HOUSING IS YOUR RIGHT: USE IT!

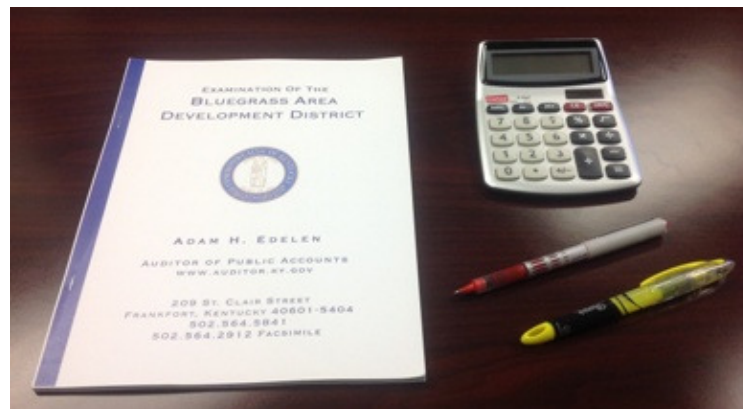
Each April, the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) leads the nation's observation of Fair Housing Month. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 is federal law which prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. This landmark civil rights legislation was passed by Congress shortly after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Locally, the Lexington Fair Housing Council will celebrate its' 20th anniversary on April 9th at the Lyric Theatre. The Fair Housing Council is an advocacy organization which offers legal assistance to citizens facing housing discrimination.

The local enforcement of housing discrimination falls under the statutory jurisdiction of the Lexington – Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission. In addition, the Kentucky Housing Corporation and the LFUCG Division of Grants & Special Programs play vital roles in raising awareness of fair housing regulations and for combating housing discrimination.



STATE AUDIT COULD IMPACT LEXINGTON'S POSITION ON WORKFORCE & JOB TRAINING



The Honorable Adam Edelen, Kentucky's State Auditor, released a special investigation of the Bluegrass Area Development District (or BGADD) on March 4th. The Bluegrass ADD is a regional planning organization based in Lexington, which serves local governments within a 17-county region in central Kentucky, including Lexington – Fayette Urban County Government.

Auditor Edelen's probe began in early July 2013, amid several allegations which led to the forced resignation of the BGADD Executive Director. At that time, I presented a Council resolution which suspended the LFUCG annual dues contribution of approximately \$75,000 to Bluegrass ADD, pending the outcome of the state audit. The resolution was unanimously adopted by Urban County Council.

Of great importance to Lexington, the Bluegrass ADD serves as the fiscal agent of the Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board (BGWIB). Since the demise & closure of the *Mayor's Training Center* in summer 2007, the Bluegrass ADD and the Bluegrass WIB have essentially assumed the workforce / job training leadership development role for Lexington. This includes establishing programmatic priority areas & the allocation of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding for job

training. As part of its investigation, the state auditor speaks specifically to concern for the managerial relationship between BGADD & the BGWIB.

During my tenure on Council, I have advocated for Lexington to recapture a greater local decision-making & leadership role, in this area of workforce and job training. The 1st Council District could better benefit from job creation strategies specifically tailored & designed to meet the needs of residents & businesses in our underserved areas. The *East End* is a good example, with an average unemployment rate hovering at 20 percent. Others neighborhoods across the city could similarly be ideal prospects for local workforce programs & job training initiatives.

The dynamics surrounding the Bluegrass ADD investigation are unfortunate. Hopefully, the state audit will offer guidance to BGADD leadership in re-establishing accountability & needed oversight reforms. But locally, LFUCG should re-evaluate our position on workforce / job training. Ultimately, my objective is to help Lexington residents compete & succeed in today's very demanding global job market.



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Councilman Chris Ford

NEWS & NOTES

Elkhorn Park Neighborhood Association

Spring Meeting

Tuesday, April 15

7:00 pm

Public Library, Northside Branch

- ♦ The *Black & Williams Neighborhood Center Board*, located at 498 Georgetown Street, is in need of membership; specifically, six (6) area residents. The Board is responsible for identifying needs for program services for the neighborhood, reviews applications for agencies to provide services in the center, makes recommendations to the commissioner, assist with personnel evaluations and advocates for program effectiveness.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, the only requirement is that you be a resident in that area. Applications can be downloaded at www.lexingtonky.gov. Click on 'City Government,' 'Mayor Jim Gray' and then 'Boards and Commissions.' On that page you'll see the three (3) steps to complete: Application, Authorization for Record Check and Submit a resume.

FY 2015 COUNCIL BUDGET SCHEDULE

Before Urban County Council adopts its fiscal year budget, many presentations, meetings and lengthy discussions will occur. These sessions are open to the public and will occur over the next few months. Some of the more significant meetings are highlighted below:

	Date	Time	Location
Mayor's Proposed Budget Address	April 8, 2014	3:00 PM	Council Chambers
Council Links (Budget Committees) Report Out	May 27, 2014	10:00 AM	Council Chambers
Public Hearing: Mayor's Proposed Budget	May 27, 2014	3:00 PM	Council Chambers
Council Links (Budget Committees) Recommendations Deadline	May 29, 2014	5:00 PM	Submitted by Email
Individual Council Members Budget Recommendations Deadline	May 30, 2014	5:00 PM	Submitted by Email
Ratify Budget / Motion to Place Budget on Docket	June 10, 2014	3:00 PM	Council Chambers
1st Reading of Budget	June 17, 2014	3:00 PM	Council Chambers
2nd Reading of Budget	June 19, 2014	6:00 PM	Council Chambers



**GOOD LUCK WILDCATS
AT THE FINAL FOUR!!**

LET'S GO BIG BLUE NATION!!

